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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) develops the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions to enhance global decision-making and to support country-level action for shaping a better future. It focuses on two sets of targeted beneficiaries: the delegates and other actors who are engaged in intergovernmental processes to establish global norms, standards, policies and procedures in areas of concern to the United Nations; and the key stakeholders at the national and local levels who work to translate multilateral agreements into specific action.

In 2014, UNITAR embarked on a new, four-year strategic framework with planned results organized under five broad programme areas: strengthening multilateralism, promoting economic development and social inclusion, advancing environmental sustainability and green growth, promoting sustainable peace, and improving resilience and humanitarian assistance. Results from 2014 are encouraging, with the Institute having provided learning, training and related knowledge-sharing services to some 31,000 individuals across all Member States, representing an increase of 22 per cent compared with the figures for 2013. Those outputs were achieved through the delivery of some 500 events, 60 per cent of which were designed around specific learning objectives.

During that period, the Institute launched several new, noteworthy initiatives, including a delegate briefing series on the post-2015 development agenda, a massive open online course on climate change, an e-course on child soldiers and a high-level seminar gathering the sitting, outgoing and incoming representatives of African States on the Security Council.

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Parallel to its programme-related results, the Institute has also achieved important results in several functional areas, including programme performance monitoring, quality assurance, partnership-building and visual identity. Some 80 per cent of the Institute's beneficiaries have participated in events organized in partnership with other entities, including other United Nations system agencies (accounting for 26 per cent of partnerships), universities and other academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

The financial performance of UNITAR reflects stability and modest growth. The total income for the biennium ending 31 December 2013 was $43.3 million, marking an increase of $1.2 million, or 2.9 per cent, compared with $42.1 million for the biennium ending 31 December 2011. The Institute has made noteworthy progress in reversing the declining trend of non-earmarked contributions to the General Fund with the generous support from the Government of Algeria.

The Secretary-General recommends that the Institute continue its efforts to respond to learning and other capacity needs in accordance with its mandate and with the 2014-2017 strategic framework, that it further strengthen the quality of its training services and that Member States provide full support to UNITAR.

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is a dedicated training arm of the United Nations. Aiming to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization, the Institute's mission is to develop the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions to enhance global decision-making and to support country-level action for shaping a better future.

2. In pursuit of that mission, the Institute places much emphasis on the delivery of learning-related products and services and on transferring knowledge, imparting skills and raising awareness, with the aim of bringing about changes in behaviour, enhancing on-the-job performance and developing other capacities of its beneficiaries, whether individuals or organizations. Parallel to its learning-specific services, the Institute also engages in training-related and advisory services to support Governments and other actors in the achievement of broader social and economic outcomes, such as strengthened multi-stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making, the early ratification and implementation of environmental agreements and enhanced coordination of relief by humanitarian agencies in the wake of natural disasters.

3. The Institute's outreach is global and targets multiple segments of society, with two particular sets of beneficiaries given primary attention: the delegates and other actors who are engaged in intergovernmental processes to establish global norms, standards, policies and procedures in the areas of peace and security and economic and social development; and the key stakeholders at the national and local levels who work to translate multilateral agreements into specific action.

4. During the biennium 2012-2013, the Institute provided training and related knowledge-sharing services to 50,723 beneficiaries, representing the second consecutive two-year cycle in which the benchmark of 50,000 beneficiaries was achieved. UNITAR delivered 847 events, equivalent to some 4,000 event-days, 65 per cent of which were designed with specific learning outcomes. Individuals from all Member States benefited from UNITAR services; 75 per cent of training-related beneficiaries came from African, Asian and Latin American and Caribbean countries, and more than half represented national, state and local government sectors. The male-to-female ratio of the Institute's training-related beneficiaries was 60:40.

5. The Institute also delivers research-related results and knowledge products. Through its Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), for example, UNITAR produced 360 maps and reports in 2012-2013 to support the international humanitarian community in decision-making and operational coordination in the field.

6. In November 2013, the Institute commemorated its fiftieth year of work since its establishment by the General Assembly in 1963. To mark the occasion, it organized a high-level event, in cooperation with the Geneva Chapter of the Group of 77 and China, during which a framework for cooperation was signed. In the framework, the participants recognized the Institute's role in training and building capacity and called upon UNITAR to provide further support to develop the capacities of the members of the Group of 77 and China.

7. In January 2014, UNITAR embarked on a new four-year strategic framework containing a set of high-level programme and functional objectives. Section II of the report pertains to key achievements made in the first year of the implementation of the framework. Section III relates to the financial situation of the Institute, which is marked by sustained levels of income and a reversal in the declining trend of non-earmarked voluntary contributions to the General Fund. Lastly, in section IV, it is recommended that the Institute continue its efforts to respond to learning and other capacity needs in accordance with its mandate and with the 2014-2017 strategic framework and that Member States provide full support to UNITAR.

II. Progress in implementing the 2014-2017 strategic framework

8. The first year of the Institute's 2014-2017 strategic framework was marked by an increase in the number of events and beneficiaries compared with the figures for 2013. UNITAR provided learning, training and related knowledge-sharing services to some 31,000 individuals, representing an increase of 24 per cent compared with the figure for 2013 (23,551). The increase was attributable primarily to the delivery of a number of large-scale conferences, such as the Americas Competitiveness Forum, and the launching of the Institute's first free massive open online course on climate change, with more than 10,000 registrations. Some 13,000 participants of the Institute's overall outreach were associated with specific learning events, representing an increase of 28 per cent compared with the figures for 2013.

9. The overall male-to-female ratio in 2014 for training-related events was 66:34, compared with 60:40 in 2013. Some 80 per cent of the Institute's training-related event beneficiaries came from African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean and Middle Eastern countries. The Institute's total outputs were produced with an annual budget of some $24 million and the delivery of nearly 500 events, equivalent to roughly 2,000 event days.[1]

10. UNITAR staff figures have a 54:46 female-to-male ratio and a 63:37 ratio of developed-to-developing country. UNITAR monitors staff composition and is committed to ensuring broad geographical representation to promote staff diversity. Moreover, it continues to engage a broad spectrum of interns, trainees and other collaborators in its programming and operations with a view to supporting their career development and meeting organizational needs.

A. Programme objectives: key achievements

1. Strengthening multilateralism

11. Since the establishment of the Institute 50 years ago, strengthening the knowledge, skills and awareness of delegates to perform effectively in the United Nations arena has been an important and strategic dimension of UNITAR programming. With the primary objective to "level the playing field" between developed-country and developing-country delegations, the Institute's core diplomatic training enhances delegates' understanding of the United Nations system,

[1] Beneficiary and event statistics reported are those recorded as at 21 January 2015.

organs and procedures, strengthens diplomatic skills relevant to conferences and negotiations and supports efforts to build a more effective multilateral system. The Institute trained more than 700 delegates in 2014 through 27 core diplomatic training activities in Geneva, New York and Vienna.

12. To support the participation of delegates from developing countries, UNITAR established the Algerian Scholarship Fund, following a generous contribution from the Government of Algeria. It enabled UNITAR to waive course fees for 151 delegates from developing countries in 2014, with half of the recipients coming from African countries. The Fund complements the important support that Sweden has provided over the years to sponsor the participation of developing countries in diplomatic training in New York. In 2014, some 100 delegates benefited from training on topics as diverse as women negotiating peace; reconciliation, negotiation and conflict prevention; and multilateral negotiation training on population and development issues.

13. In addition to its regular core diplomatic training, UNITAR launched an initiative to support Member States by empowering their delegates to reach agreement on the post-2015 development agenda. Coordinated closely with 22 diverse partner institutions from inside and outside the United Nations system, and with direct guidance from the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, and facilitated by a team of prominent United Nations and academic experts, UNITAR raised the awareness of 485 delegates from Member States and 28 delegates from regional organizations through 20 interactive technical briefings conducted in Geneva and New York. Some 95 per cent of beneficiary respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the briefings were very useful overall. Of those delegates who attended the briefings in New York, 95 per cent of respondents confirmed that they were already, or were going to be, directly involved in the post-2015 negotiations.

14. In parallel with the briefings, UNITAR has also developed an online resource platform to support the learning experience and will in 2015 be delivering a free massive open online course that will target anyone interested in understanding key processes and concepts relating to the post-2015 development agenda. Drawing on the success of the briefings, a second phase of the initiative, which will involve close collaboration with the Development Operations Coordination Office and the United Nations System Staff College, will entail the design of learning tools and workshops to enable United Nations country teams to deliver training to Governments and national change agents.

15. Supporting participation in climate change diplomacy in the lead-up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change continues to be an important thematic area under strengthening multilateralism. In 2014, UNITAR delivered eight training activities, both online and face-to-face, on climate change diplomacy and developed the capacities of more than 342 government officers and other stakeholders in terms of the substance, processes and procedures of the climate negotiations.

16. In addition to focusing on climate change as a major thematic area, UNITAR has also placed emphasis on raising awareness in the field of international trade by briefing more than 100 delegates in Geneva and New York on the World Trade Organization (WTO) Bali Package, in cooperation with various partners, including

WTO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Trade Centre and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

2. Promoting economic development and social inclusion

17. UNITAR programming under the broad field of promoting economic development and social inclusion includes projects and initiatives under diverse thematic areas. The Institute continued to develop the knowledge and skills of trade and finance-related stakeholders in the areas of poverty reduction, debt and prudent financial management, as well as in trade, regional integration and intellectual property for development. Over the course of 2014, UNITAR trained some 2,000 government officials and other stakeholders in those subject areas, including more than 1,000 government officials on issues relating to best practices in international trade and investment and regional integration. Specific focus has been placed on strengthening collaboration and partnership with international and regional organizations through joint work that leverages the comparative advantage and strengths of each institution.

18. Promoting youth employability being one of the priorities in the five-year action agenda of the Secretary-General, UNITAR is working to contribute to that objective through two specific initiatives. In close partnership with the Government of Algeria, it has launched an entrepreneurship training programme for young graduates to contribute to the creation of small enterprises and microbusinesses in various strategic sectors of Algeria and to the reduction of youth unemployment. Its features include participatory design, which engages seven Algerian ministries and agencies in collaborative efforts to train 700 young graduates in entrepreneurship skills, an experiential learning approach and a monitoring and evaluation process. An important cornerstone was laid in 2014 with the development of a common competency framework, the training of a group of 28 trainers and the roll-out of an initial series of awareness-raising workshops for 75 young graduates. Algeria envisages that the pilot programme will serve as a model for other entrepreneurship training in the country.

19. In a second initiative, designed and implemented in partnership with the Petroleum Technology Development Fund of Nigeria, UNITAR is empowering young Nigerians to be employable in the oil and gas industry in Rivers and Delta States. At the end of the three-year project, it is expected that the selected participants will have graduated from university engineering programmes and possess the technical competencies and hands-on drilling experience for employment in the oil and gas industry. A milestone was achieved in 2014, with a group of 39 young Nigerians completing the intensive pre-engineering training session and having secured entrance into the Stord/Haugesund University College in Norway to undertake a bachelor's degree programme in petroleum technology, beginning in January 2015.

20. The Institute's network of affiliated international training centres for local actors (CIFAL, le Centre international de formation des acteurs locaux) has grown with the establishment of two centres in Quito and San Salvador. The centres complement the programming undertaken by the other 10 CIFAL centres worldwide and are expected to contribute to the Institute's efforts to meet training and other capacity development needs in Latin America and the Caribbean more effectively, with particular emphasis on the areas of economic development, migration, social

inclusion and the green economy. The CIFAL network allows UNITAR to reach out to local authorities and other stakeholders, covering a wide range of thematic areas relating to governance and sustainable development, with some 4,600 participants having taken part in various learning and knowledge-sharing events in 2014. The Institute's contribution to the network involves support, coordination, oversight and technical assistance and advice in the development, implementation and reporting of activities. The Antwerp-based International Training Centre for Action Learning on Sustainability and Business Ethics (formally called the International Training Centre for Corporate Opportunities), also affiliated with UNITAR, is expected to be integrated into the CIFAL network in 2015.

21. In the field of international migration, UNITAR, with the support of the World Bank and other institutional partners, launched a process by which municipal and regional leaders can share best practices on governing with regard to greater diversity and mobility within urban centres. The first Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development, held in Barcelona, Spain, in June 2014, culminated in the Call of Barcelona, in which representatives of more than 30 cities stressed the need to provide greater voice and access to local government in decision-making circles with regard to migration. This provides UNITAR with an opportunity to support policy dialogue, assist in developing the capacity of stakeholders, advance policy thinking on migration and its international implications and facilitate access to new and emerging vectors of influence in an increasingly mobile world. The second Mayoral Forum, scheduled to be held in Quito on 17 and 18 September 2015, will stress the role of local government in the implementation of the new international development agenda. Its outcomes will feed into the Global Forum on Migration and Development, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2015, and the International Organization for Migration interministerial conference, also to be held in October 2015.

22. As the newest member of the United Nations-European Commission Joint Migration and Development Initiative, UNITAR and its CIFAL centres will implement migration projects that support local development within communities at points of origin and destination of migration. UNITAR co-chairs, with the International Organization for Migration, the capacity development work for the Global Migration Group, chairs the capacity development cluster for the World Bank Global Partnership on Migration and Development project and participates in the core drafting team of the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development and in the informal working group on migration.

23. Lastly, in response to Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2171 (2014) and General Assembly resolution 68/278, the Institute, in partnership with Yale University, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other partners, piloted a series of short retreats for members of the diplomatic community in New York and other invited guests to discern a common understanding of governance and to promote social cohesion.

3. Advancing environmental sustainability and green development

24. The Institute continues to contribute to building human and institutional capacity to overcome critical environmental challenges and promote low-carbon

growth, with a focus on activities in the areas of climate change, chemicals and waste management and environmental governance.

25. UNITAR contributed to the successful completion of the pilot implementation phase of the One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership project, funded by the Government of Switzerland. Results from the pilot phase included the development and early implementation of national climate change learning strategies in Benin, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Malawi and Uganda, with some 1,000 national climate change stakeholders attending various national planning and priority-setting workshops and learning strategy launch events in each country. A global knowledge-sharing platform was also completed and had attracted 27,000 unique visitors from more than 190 countries by the end of 2013.

26. In 2014, UNITAR and its partners launched a three-year follow-up phase of the Learning Partnership, with further support from the Government of Switzerland, aiming to significantly increase the scope of the programme by involving more countries and engaging with a wider range of key global thematic climate change issues. This new phase will see upscaling through a subregional climate change learning initiative focusing on Central America and the inclusion of five new countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kazakhstan and the Niger). An important milestone was achieved with the launch of a free, online introductory e-course on climate change, which has to date attracted more than 10,000 registrations from 195 States parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including all 48 least developed countries. The course provides a complete introduction to climate change, including science, policy, technical responses, planning and finance. As at the end of 2014, more than 800 participants had successfully completed the six modules of the course, while thousands of others had successfully completed at least one module. French and Spanish versions will be launched in 2015.

27. The Institute has also scaled up its green economy programming, which seeks to help countries to advance macroeconomic policy analysis and reforms as a vehicle to furthering sustainable development. Initially launched in 2012, the programming now includes both face-to-face and online learning, together with activities implemented with other partners of the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy, such as policy dialogues and partnerships with academic and other learning institutions to develop a strategic approach to green economy learning at the national level and to integrate the green economy into their curricula. Some two thirds of the Institute's programming beneficiaries come from developing countries, with a range of employment and civil society sectors represented. Results and budgeted resources for this area of programming have grown over the past two years. With a budget of some $800,000, training will be delivered in 2015 to some 1,400 beneficiaries.

28. In environmental governance and democracy, UNITAR, in partnership with Yale University and collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), organized the third Conference on Environmental Governance and Democracy, held in New Haven, United States of America, in September 2014. The Conference, on the theme "Human rights, environmental sustainability, post-2015 development agenda and the future climate regime", brought together more than 150 academics and policy experts to discuss state-of-the-art knowledge at the nexus of human rights and the environment. The Conference is linked to a new partnership

of UNEP, UNITAR and UNDP to support countries in developing national legislation on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.

29. The Institute's programming in the area of chemicals and waste management continues to expand. In 2014, UNITAR launched a two-year initiative to support 15 countries to accelerate the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Funded by the Government of Switzerland, the initiative assists countries to prepare ratification dossiers and identify action for early implementation. Country projects have been initiated in the Gambia, Jordan, Mongolia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Senegal, Uruguay and Zambia. UNITAR received an award at the sixth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, held in Bangkok in November 2014, in recognition of its contribution to supporting the ratification and early implementation of the Convention.

30. Working with other partners, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNEP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and with the support of the European Union, UNITAR is contributing to the expansion and promotion of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals Toolbox to support the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. The Toolbox is designed to provide improved access to tools developed by the participating organizations and that address national chemicals management challenges at the country level. In partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana and with the support of the Global Environment Facility, UNITAR entered into the final phase of a multi-year project that strengthened Ghanaian national legal and environmental management frameworks and eliminated and/or destroyed the country's remaining stocks of polychlorinated biphenyls.

31. Parallel to the capacity development projects listed above, UNITAR also trained some 870 government officers and other stakeholders in the areas of nanotechnology safety and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals through the delivery of 23 face-to-face and online training sessions.

4. Promoting sustainable peace

32. The Institute's contribution to the promotion of sustainable peace includes training, knowledge products and high-level advocacy and knowledge-sharing in various areas, including preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict governance and institutional strengthening.

33. UNITAR has strengthened its high-level engagement activities with Member States and the United Nations. In addition to continuing to plan and facilitate the seminar for special and personal representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General (now in its tenth year), UNITAR engaged the outgoing, sitting and incoming representatives of African States on the Security Council, together with the Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and senior officials of the African Union Commission, to develop a common vision and policies on peace and security issues in Africa. Convened by Algeria and the African

Union Commission, in collaboration with UNITAR, the high-level event provided an opportunity for participants to receive briefings from special envoys and representatives of the African Union on the current peace and security situations on the continent, in addition to a brief overview on the challenges facing the Peace and Security Council.

34. To increase its regional training initiatives, UNITAR has launched, in partnership with the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, a project to enhance regional capacity for peace in Central Asia. The purpose of the collaboration is to build on the comparative advantages of each institution to reinforce regional capacity to manage cross-border threats, by means of the reinforcement of the expertise of mid-level and high-level civil servants in key areas (such as good governance, conflict transformation, human security, natural resources management and public-private partnerships for conflict prevention) and the consolidation of regional cooperation in Central Asia.

35. In partnership with the International Peace Institute, UNITAR successfully implemented the annual Fellowship Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy. Now in its twenty-first year, the Programme trained 37 senior to mid-level diplomats, United Nations staff and representatives of regional organizations in conflict analysis, negotiation, mediation and reconciliation. To mark that milestone, UNITAR published *Strengthening the Practice of Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy in the United Nations: the UNITAR Approach*, which contains contributions from the high-level experts and practitioners teaching on the Programme. The book, launched at the United Nations Office at Geneva at an event entitled "Training peacemakers", is being provided to the permanent representatives of all Member States in New York and Geneva and to heads of regional organizations, programme alumni and other key actors in the fields of conflict prevention and peacemaking.

36. With regard to peacekeeping, the Institute has successfully completed the third phase of its project on strengthening African peacekeeping training centres. With support from the Government of Germany, the project strengthens centres in Egypt, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and Rwanda, in addition to that of the Southern African Development Community in Zimbabwe, through a combination of training, coaching and mentoring strategies. By the end of 2013, more than 100 trainers from the centres had completed one of the project's methodological or thematic courses. In mid-2014, UNITAR launched the project's fourth phase, with the objective of strengthening the capacities of the centres in new thematic areas, addressing the needs of other such centres in Africa and strengthening the project's community of practice.

37. Parallel to those efforts, UNITAR has launched an international master's degree programme in conflictology, in collaboration with the Open University of Catalonia. The two-year programme is designed to meet the training needs of United Nations mission staff and personnel from troop-contributing countries and to further fill key gaps identified in the needs assessments conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Services and the Integrated Training Service. The programme is administered entirely online and is organized around a series of courses equivalent to 60 European Credit Transfer System credits, with interactive learning, reflection exercises, activities, discussion forums, quizzes and self-assessments and evaluations. While the master's degree is conferred by the

Open University of Catalonia, the programme courses are delivered by both UNITAR and the University. As at the end of 2014, 69 candidates had enrolled in the programme, 20 of whom are expected to be conferred with the degree in 2015.

38. Responding to the recommendations by the Security Council in its resolution 2143 (2014) with regard to training, UNITAR has joined the global call to make child soldiers history. As a first step, the Institute, together with the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative of Dalhousie University, has trained 22 military and policy personnel and other stakeholders through the delivery of two online training courses on child soldiers and security forces. The courses have been developed under a more comprehensive project framework on child soldiering that UNITAR will be rolling out in 2015.

39. Along with preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping, the Institute continued to contribute to post-conflict governance recovery in Afghanistan. Since UNITAR began its efforts in 2003, more than 400 Afghans have taken part in the UNITAR Fellowship for Afghanistan through training, coaching and mentoring strategies, with the objective of contributing to the organizational and human resources development of Afghan ministries and agencies. The Fellowship, an on-the-job training programme delivered over seven months, features a blended approach, combining face-to-face training and coaching, webinars, audio seminars and needs-based project identification and development. In the 2014 cycle, the augmentation of topics covered in the day-long webinars was key. Delivered online, and featuring practical exercises expedited in collaboration with local actors, the newly developed sessions examined qualitative data analysis, gender mainstreaming and risk mitigation — topics that were identified through in-depth, needs-based analysis undertaken with local experts.

40. The Fellowship incorporates selected graduates in subsequent annual cycles, promoted to provide indigenous insight, contextualization and buy-in. Such graduates, who are assigned coaching roles, are provided with additional training in coaching, mentoring and social entrepreneurship. In addition, the Fellowship includes pro bono mentoring of participants by senior professionals from around the globe. The mentors, experts in their own right, engage online with fellows on a monthly basis, providing guidance, insight and expertise, which results in the projects undertaken through the programme being developed indigenously, while at the same time, they are internationally reviewed. Augmenting this, the 2013 and 2014 cycles saw the milestone incorporation of professionals from Afghanistan — many of them graduates of the programme itself — as mentors, teamed with those international actors to provide a deeper acknowledgement, throughout the project development process, of the challenges, opportunities and realities as they exist in Afghanistan. This underscores the commitment of UNITAR and the Fellowship to sustainable, indigenous capacity-building for the country. The Fellowship continues to be well supported from within Afghanistan, with the networks of like-minded professionals developed through the intensive capacity-building process seen as one of its key outcomes. Many graduates of the programme have become increasingly important decision makers within the public service and civil society and include a parliamentarian and a number of directors general, vice-ministers and ministers.

41. Part of the same effort undertaken by the Institute towards post-conflict governance recovery in Afghanistan is the implementation of a master's degree programme on development policies and practices, organized yearly since 2013 and

targeting Afghan civil servants primarily from the Ministry of Finance, as well as from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economics and the Office of the President. This joint UNITAR-Afghan programme was conceived to meet specific needs expressed by the Government of Afghanistan to enhance capacity in the field of public policy and sustainable development, by strengthening professional skills while empowering beneficiaries to become high-level decision makers in the reconstruction of their country. Implemented in partnership with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, the year-long training course consists of a series of sessions delivered in Abu Dhabi, Istanbul and Geneva, incorporating a blended approach of face-to-face and e-learning methods, together with project-based research and one-to-one coaching. The programme culminates in the granting of a master's degree in a graduation ceremony that is held both in Geneva and Kabul.

42. The programme was first implemented in 2013-2014 for a group of 20 government officials, who graduated in February 2014. Its successful implementation led partners to undertake the roll-out of a second edition, which is currently being implemented and scheduled for completion in February 2015. UNITAR plans to deliver a third consecutive programme in May 2015.

5. Improving resilience and humanitarian assistance

43. Benefiting from close collaboration with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the Institute, through UNOSAT, is engaged in efforts to improve resilience and humanitarian assistance. The work of UNOSAT places emphasis on geographic information systems (GIS) and satellite imagery, which help to plan resilience and can provide timely and high-quality information to key decision makers in times of humanitarian crises and natural disasters. Aiming to support the international humanitarian community with improved access to information for decision-making and operational coordination in the field, in 2014 UNOSAT produced 250 maps derived from satellite imagery and reports covering natural disasters and humanitarian crises, including the continuing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. At the request of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for example, UNOSAT provided assessments of damage following floods in Pakistan and a landslide in Afghanistan. UNOSAT also supported WHO in the response to the Ebola outbreak, providing up-to-date satellite imagery used for access to and planning of Ebola treatment centres and surrounding areas. Regarding the Syrian Arab Republic, UNOSAT continued to provide mapping to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian agencies and, in addition, issued a comprehensive report on the destruction of cultural heritage sites caused by the conflict. The assessment found that 290 locations had been damaged, of which 24 had been destroyed and 104 severely damaged. Following military operations in Gaza in the middle of 2014, UNOSAT was requested by UNDP to deploy a geographic information expert and to elaborate satellite-derived analysis on the impact of the conflict on the Gaza Strip. The information was included in the report presented at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza.

44. In parallel to those activities, UNOSAT has been leading two noteworthy capacity development projects to support the GIS-related capacity of Governments and organizations. In partnership with the Intergovernmental Authority on

Development (IGAD) and with support from the Government of Norway, UNOSAT is developing capacity in the use of geospatial technology to tackle disaster risk reduction in the Horn of Africa. The project strengthens technical knowledge and skills in the use of GIS and remote-sensing technology for disaster risk reduction to enhance planning, emergency preparedness and prevention throughout the region, raise awareness of geospatial technology for disaster risk reduction and ways to use that information for coordination, dissemination and decision-making in the region and improve service delivery and data delivery of IGAD and its partners by developing an accessible geoportal. While the first phase of the project (2012-2013) focused solely on the staff of the IGAD secretariat, the second phase, covering the period from 2014 to 2016, extends GIS training services to include representatives of the States members of IGAD. IGAD staff use the skills acquired to create maps and geographical data in-house and to share information on subjects relating to disaster risk reduction with partners in the region.

45. With support from the Government of Switzerland, UNITAR works in partnership with the Government of Chad to increase its resilience to climate change through the development of sustainable management of water resources and surface aquifers using advanced GIS and satellite technology. Improved access to water will have a direct impact on health, food security, efforts to combat poverty and the development of village and rural communities. The project's objectives are to improve knowledge of water resources, consolidate and develop initiatives in the sector, strengthen national capacity in the fields of geology and GIS and better manage ground and surface water. In 2014, the Institute neared the completion of the first phase of the project. Results include the production, in collaboration with the Government, of numerous hydrogeological maps covering the northern parts of the country, the field validation of hydrogeological parameters, the successful implementation of the country's first master's degree course on GIS for hydrogeological applications and the initial version of a geodatabase accessible to the Government and various development actors focusing on water-related data.

46. In connection with its various activities, UNOSAT has developed the knowledge and skills of 158 national and regional experts on the use of GIS and satellite imagery for disaster risk reduction and response and natural resources management.

47. The Institute has continued its research on advanced technology applications for participatory analysis and collaborative computing using distributed systems, the cloud and crowd-sourcing methodologies. UNITAR, the University of Geneva and CERN have increased their joint research effort also by scaling up the joint Citizen Cyberscience Centre, which is now housed at the Campus Biotech in Geneva. The Centre acts as a technology lab by hosting researchers working on web-based applications pertinent to the activities of the three founding partners: e-health, particle physics and satellite imagery analysis. One cutting-edge application, Geotag-X, developed in collaboration with UNOSAT experts, twice received international recognition in 2014. The Institute is planning to give visibility to some of these innovative applications through the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in 2016.

B. Functional objectives: key achievements

1. Strengthening programming for results

48. As described in 2013 (see E/2013/63), UNITAR has made progress in strengthening its managing for results, performance measurement and evaluation frameworks and practices. Its budgets are now fully aligned with the high-level programme and functional objectives of the strategic framework. It has also introduced a matrix presentation of the results components of its programme budgets, in which the planned results of multiple programmes contributing to the same overall objective are presented together. This change in presentation helped to reduce the silo effect and to promote coherence and synergy between programmes and offices working towards the same or similar programme objectives.

49. The Institute is increasing efforts to measure the achievement of learning outcomes as the result of its training activities. In 2013, learning outcomes were measured in 78 per cent of learning events being held over two days or more, with various assessment approaches used, including self-assessment and various forms of objective and performance testing. Multiple methods were used in nearly half of the events.

50. Beyond measuring participant reaction and the achievement of learning outcomes, the Institute also monitors the extent to which learning is applied on the job. Early in 2014, participants completing learning events in 2013 were randomly sampled to assess the extent to which knowledge and/or skills were being applied as a follow-up to training. Some 82 per cent of the 263 respondents confirmed that they had applied knowledge and/or skills to their respective workplaces. Of those respondents, 56 per cent indicated that transfer or application was frequent and 41 per cent that it was occasional. The opportunity to apply knowledge gained, confidence and relevance to job success were cited by respondents as the top three enablers to knowledge and skills transfer. In contrast, the lack of time, the lack of opportunity and the fact that systems and processes were not supporting transfer or application were the top three factors cited by those respondents who indicated that there was no transfer/application.

51. While the Institute has made progress over the past years in the conduct of training and other project evaluations, most evaluation undertakings are performed at the decentralized level by the programmes involved in project design and implementation. Only on rare occasions, and when project budgets permit, does the Institute pursue independent, external evaluation. Consequently, the self-evaluation exercises tend to focus primarily on the evaluation's accountability function, with more emphasis needing to be placed on learning and quality improvement. To tackle those shortcomings, the Institute plans to introduce more regular independent evaluative undertakings and has accorded priority to finding the required funding for 2015, as recommended by its Board of Trustees.

2. Quality assurance

52. The Institute continues its efforts to strengthen the quality of its training. As previously mentioned (see E/2013/63), it established an internal quality assurance framework for learning-related events with a view to validating the quality of training products and services, strengthening quality and providing a platform for experience-sharing and lessons learned on quality reviews. Since the application of

the framework began in 2013, UNITAR has undertaken quality assurance self-assessments of more than 100 learning-related events, with 65 self-assessments having been completed in 2014. The Institute's Quality Assurance Committee has performed 14 independent peer reviews and issued some 70 recommendations on strengthening learning design, delivery and evaluation. The framework is proving to be a useful internal tool to validate and strengthen quality. While the application framework is improving, some programmes have been more consistent in applying the quality standards than others.

53. In October 2014, the Quality Assurance Committee organized a staff retreat with the aim of identifying and discussing lessons to be learned from applying the framework. The discussions uncovered the need to continuously work to raise awareness of the framework, especially given the large number of new staff and personnel regularly joining the Institute. A series of online "learning nuggets" has been produced to introduce the framework and its major elements. An important takeaway from the staff discussions was the acknowledgment that quality should be seen as a collective good and that continuous efforts need to be exerted to further develop the Institute's culture of quality, learning and experience-sharing among staff.

54. In addition to making inroads on its internal quality assurance practices, UNITAR continues to participate in the external certification process for e-learning programmes and institutions in international capacity-building (ECBCheck) of the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning. At the outset of 2014, UNITAR was awarded five additional ECBCheck certificates for online courses in the fields of sustainable waste management, green economy and international law, multilateral diplomacy and peacekeeping. Since the launch of the scheme in 2010, UNITAR has received nine certificates and is anticipating that an additional five e-courses will receive certification early in 2015.

3. Partnership-building

55. The Institute's partnership strategy is an integral part of its approach to achieving its programme results, by combining the substantive expertise of United Nations entities and other partners with its internal expertise in programming, instructional design and adult learning. Of the Institute's 494 events delivered in 2014, 295 (60 per cent) were organized in partnership with other entities and three quarters of all beneficiaries participated in events organized with partners. They included organizations as diverse as other United Nations agencies (representing some 26 per cent of all partnerships), other international and regional organizations, national training institutes, foundations, universities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

56. While the Institute engages with a diverse spectrum of partners, several partnerships have become instrumental, including the One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership, a project undertaken by 33 United Nations and other multilateral organizations in support of country-driven, results-based learning on climate change; the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy, a joint initiative involving ILO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and UNITAR; and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, which brings UNITAR together with six other United Nations system agencies, in addition to the World Bank and OECD.

57. Apart from the sizable number of organizational partners with which the Institute engages, UNITAR also recognizes the strategic importance of a number of donor partners, including Algeria, Germany, Nigeria, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

4. Renewed visual identity

58. Good communications are vital to helping to achieve strategic objectives. They increase awareness, build trust and credibility and attract more beneficiaries and partners in the long term. Communicating effectively and engaging with internal and external stakeholders increase the impact of UNITAR programming.

59. On the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary and the first year of the new strategic framework, the Institute refreshed its branding guidelines and the visual identity and overhauled its corporate website. The objectives of the renewal are to increase the visibility and awareness of UNITAR, improve the Institute's image, build trust and credibility and enhance the coherence of all communications throughout the Institute.

60. The new branding guidelines aim to demonstrate how UNITAR communicates its mission through appropriate language, consistent design elements and professional imagery that illustrate "who we are", "what we do" and "why we matter" in all communication situations.

61. The Institute also launched a more robust corporate website, which improved on the structure, design, user experience and technology. The redesigned website is aligned with the new strategic framework, has enhanced user experience and is adapted to user behaviour, and is backed up by a more robust and stable platform. With those improvements, the Institute hopes to attract more visitors to the website and to expand its services to more beneficiaries and partners.

III. Financial situation of the Institute

62. The Institute's financial situation is evidenced by continued stability and modest growth. The total income for the biennium ending 31 December 2013 was $43.3 million, marking an increase of $1.2 million, or 2.9 per cent, compared with the total of $42.1 million for the biennium ending 31 December 2011. In November 2014, the Board of Trustees adopted the revised programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 of $48.5 million, with an increase of 4.2 per cent over the initial budget for the biennium of $46.6 million.

63. The Institute has made progress in reversing the declining trend of non-earmarked contributions to the General Fund. The change resulted largely from the generous contribution of the Government of Algeria to support the implementation of the 2014-2017 strategic framework. The non-earmarked reserves increased from $0.56 million at the end of 2013 to some $1.3 million at the end of 2014. UNITAR aims to further increase non-earmarked reserves to some $2 million by the end of 2015.

64. The Institute has designed and implemented a new cost-recovery approach in response to recommendations by the Board of Auditors. The approach, which differentiates between indirect and direct support costs, has increased transparency with donors and has proved effective in covering the costs of the Institute's vital

support functions. The approach was supported by the oversight bodies, including the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

65. For the fourth consecutive biennium (2012-2013), the Institute received an unqualified audit opinion of its financial statements from the Board of Auditors. Most of the recommendations have been implemented.

IV. Recommendations

66. It is recommended that Member States take note of the Institute's increase in beneficiaries since 2013 and that they recommend that the Institute continue its efforts to respond to learning and other capacity needs in accordance with its mandate and with the 2014-2017 strategic framework, as well as to continue its drive for quality assurance of its programming.

67. Recognizing the important contribution of the Government of Algeria to the General Fund, it is also recommended that Member States provide full support to UNITAR, including the necessary non-earmarked funding that will allow UNITAR to meet its core requirements.